



A LEGACY OF BELONGING

Why the Bezan Chair for Community and Inclusion at Winsor Matters

AS SOME INSTITUTIONS retreat from diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, a permanently endowed chair ensures that at The Winsor School, these values are not optional—they're foundational.

"Winsor has always been a leader in this work," says Julian Braxton, the inaugural holder of the Bezan Chair for Community and Inclusion. "The fact that we have an endowed chair...it's groundbreaking, but it feels like that's what you do. The title of our campaign is Winsor Leads. That's how you lead."

The chair Julian holds, named in honor of former Winsor educator and administrator Diane Bezan, supports initiatives that strengthen community, foster belonging, and teach students to embrace diversity. Diane helped recruit Julian to Winsor after he finished his master's at Harvard University. "Her ability to listen, her ability to lead in a very thoughtful way with decision making, and her ability to think about all the constituencies of the school are things that I believe that I do," he says. "In many ways, my leadership style is modeled after hers."

Winsor is one of the only schools to have an endowed chair focused on this important work. Because of that unique offering, *Independent School Magazine* featured Julian in a 2023 article. "It is a testament to Winsor, saying that this will be not only part of our mission now, but that community, diversity, and social justice will *always* be part of our identity as a school. That symbolism received national attention," he says.

Funding associated with the chair allows the school to bring in compelling speakers, host impactful student and faculty programming, and create professional development experiences that deepen cultural understanding.

Annually, Julian brings a small delegation of faculty and staff members to the National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. On-campus speakers have included a UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador who works on climate justice issues, a Holocaust survivor, and a civil rights leader who was friends with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Assemblies sponsored by Julian's office highlight authors focusing on diverse characters and subjects. Winsor's Muslim affinity group partnered to bring children's book author Hena Khan, who writes about identity, community, and inclusion. Another event featured an author closer to home—Winsor English Faculty Lisa Stringfellow. During a recent assembly where she spoke, every student received a copy of her second novel, *Kingdom of Dust*.

Julian notes that, in many ways, this work is a continuation of the vision of Winsor's sixth head of school, Carolyn Peter, who appointed the school's first director of diversity in 1999.

Now, with the Bezan Chair firmly in place, Winsor is positioned not only to sustain those efforts but to lead them. "At the core of all this work is a simple idea," Julian says. "Everyone who walks into this school should know they belong."